United Nations A/56/7/Add.11

General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 May 2002
Original: English

Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 123
Programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003

Conference and support services extended to the Counter-Terrorism Committee in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001)

Twelfth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/56/42) containing revised estimates under sections 2 and 27D of the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003. During its consideration of the report, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information.

2. The Security Council on 28 September 2001 adopted resolution 1373 (2001), concerning measures to prevent terrorism, and decided, inter alia, to establish the Counter-Terrorism Committee to monitor the implementation of that resolution with the assistance of appropriate expertise. The Security Council also called upon all States to report to the Committee, no later than 90 days from the adoption of the resolution and thereafter according to a timetable to be proposed by the Committee, on the steps they had taken to implement the resolution.

3. As indicated in paragraph 3 of the Secretary-General's report, resources for the substantive servicing of the Counter-Terrorism Committee for the biennium 2002-2003 were requested in the context of the report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council is seized (see A/C.5/56/25) and the related provisions were approved by the General Assembly in its resolutions 56/255 of 24 December 2001 and 56/254 D of 27 March 2002. However, no estimates for conference and central support services for the Committee were submitted for consideration by the General Assembly in December 2001 in view of the insufficient experience and information on the servicing requirements of the Committee.

* The report of the Secretary-General was considered by the Advisory Committee on 15 May 2002. The Committee's draft report was approved by it on 20 May 2002 and sent for processing on that date.

02-39107 (E) 210502

4. The Secretary-General indicates in his report that the additional cost for conference and other support services for the Counter-Terrorism Committee is estimated at $10,537,500 for 2002 ($9,954,000 under section 2, General Assembly affairs and conference services, and $583,500 under section 27D, Central support services). The Advisory Committee observes that conference and central support services were provided to the Committee during the first months of 2002 by using the resources programmed to service meetings of other intergovernmental organs scheduled for the second half of 2002. The Secretary-General indicates that, in view of the magnitude of the services involved, these arrangements cannot continue without detrimental effects on meetings programmed for other bodies during the remainder of 2002. The Advisory Committee notes that it is envisaged that the Counter-Terrorism Committee would hold 217 meetings in 2002. According to the Secretary-General, should the Committee continue its activities in 2003, appropriate proposals would be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

5. Paragraphs 5 and 6 of the report contain information on experience in servicing the Counter-Terrorism Committee during the period from October 2001 to March 2002. This information is based on the first round of reporting by Member States on the implementation of resolution 1373 (2001). The Advisory Committee was informed that all States were expected to respond to two more rounds of reporting before the Security Council reviews the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee in October 2002.

6. The Advisory Committee was also informed, upon enquiry, that during the month of April 2002 the Counter-Terrorism Committee held 12 meetings out of 15 scheduled at its request, and that its documentation consisted of 29 reports (565 translated pages) and 51 other documents (69 pages). The Committee observes that, on average, the Counter-Terrorism Committee held from three to four meetings per week and that its documentation amounted to 625 translated pages per month, consisting of reports of Member States and other documentation, during the period from January to April 2002. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's report that, for the period from October 2001 to March 2002, 68 meetings were scheduled, of which 55 were held and 13 were cancelled by the Committee.

7. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 13 of the report that the workload related to the servicing of the Counter-Terrorism Committee in 2002 is projected at four or five meetings per week, including translation and processing of, on average, 700 pages of documentation per month. The Committee's proceedings will not be covered by summary records, unless a request for summary records for a specific meeting is made by the Committee members; for the purpose of the estimates, the Secretary-General assumes that summary records would be provided for one such meeting per week.

8. The Secretary-General estimates that, to accommodate the estimated 217 meetings of the Counter-Terrorism Committee in 2002, resources equivalent to 9 interpreter and 1.5 conference support staff full-time positions would be required on a temporary basis. As regards the translation and reproduction of Committee documents, the Secretary-General estimates that 200 pages per month on average could be processed within the existing capacity of the Secretariat and the remaining 500 pages would represent an additional workload which would require full-time positions for 41 translator/revisers and 30 text processors on a temporary basis. The

Advisory Committee recalls, in this connection, that the General Assembly, in section IV, paragraph 5, of its resolution 56/242, decided to conduct a comprehensive review of current norms and standards of productivity in the language services and the impact of ongoing technological innovations on their work, and requested the Secretary-General to submit a detailed report on the subject to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

9. As can be seen from annex I to the Secretary-General's report, the bulk of the estimated conference-servicing cost of $9,954,000 falls under translation/revision ($6,302,300). The Advisory Committee trusts that necessary measures will be taken to reduce the cost of translation/revision, through, inter alia, increased use of contractual arrangements. The use of contractual arrangements should also, in the view of the Committee, bring about savings in general operating expenses, including computers and other equipment maintenance costs and related supplies, now estimated at $314,400 (see A/C.5/56/42, para. 19). The Committee stresses, however, that measures need to be taken to ensure that the use of contractual services does not negatively affect the quality of documentation for the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

10. The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly invite the Security Council to ensure that the proceedings of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and other subsidiary bodies of the Council that require conference servicing are conducted with due regard to the most efficient use of conference-servicing resources. To this end, the Security Council may wish to consider the merits of establishing appropriate guidelines for, inter alia, the format and, to the extent feasible and acceptable, the volume of the reports that all States are requested to submit for consideration by the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

11. Taking into account its comments and observations in the paragraphs above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments of up to $7.5 million related to the provision of conference and central support services to the Counter-Terrorism Committee in 2002. Such additional appropriations as may be necessary can be dealt with in the context of the first performance report for the biennium 2002-2003, which should include detailed information on expenditures relating to the provision of conference and central support services to the Counter-Terrorism Committee in 2002.